

*Taking steps in the right direction, the Community Welfare Council of Milwaukee County has recently broadened the scope of its nurse recruitment program to include all auxiliary health professions. The council's Health Division Careers Committee is coordinating the recruitment efforts of 22 community organizations and health professions.*

## Milwaukee's Health Careers Committee

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AS MILWAUKEE's population has increased, there has been a growing concern over the inadequate number of hospital beds to serve the needs of this large population center. In November 1951 the United Hospitals Fund of Milwaukee County was established as a continuing organization to provide leadership in planning and financing needed hospital expansion.

Accompanying this upswing of interest in expansion of hospitals has been the concern expressed by hospital administrators and directors of nursing over the problem of staffing the proposed new facilities. Expansion of present facilities will, they maintain, only serve to aggravate the difficulties of trying to fill existing vacancies.

At the annual meeting of the Health Division of the Community Welfare Council of

Milwaukee County in 1950, its Medical Care Committee presented a panel discussion based on the committee's study of staff shortages as they affect nursing home and hospital services. The chairman introduced the discussion by likening medical care to a symphony orchestra with the physician as conductor: Just as the conductor is dependent on the members of his orchestra to produce the desired symphonic effects, he said, so the physician is dependent on the kind and amount of available staff to produce the desired results for his patients.

The panel reported the need for more workers to meet the current demands in nursing, anesthesia, laboratory and medical technology, and medical record library work. These shortages were illustrative of the current problems in other health fields, too, problems which would be accentuated with expansion of hospital and other community health facilities. The chairman, at the conclusion of the program, asked that thought be given to plans for the preparation of more workers to staff the present facilities and meet the demands of expansion.

As a result of the interest shown by increasing numbers of hospital administrators and service directors in the problems of staff shortages, the Milwaukee Hospital Council in September

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1951 instructed its Public Relations Committee to give attention to recruitment matters.

The committee learned that the National Nurse Anesthetist Association had 500 known vacancies in its field and no applicants in prospect. Wisconsin and Milwaukee had their proportionate share of this shortage as well as of the more drastic one in the nursing field. The Wisconsin State Department of Nursing had already reported a dropoff in enrollment in schools of nursing in the State, and Milwaukee nursing school statistics reflected this. Reversing this situation in the nursing schools and finding methods of increasing school enrollment in all of the health professions were essential steps in meeting the increasing service demands.

### **Working With School Counselors**

Taking note of the fact that high school guidance counselors are key persons in guiding young people in their choice of a profession, the public relations group met with counselors and representatives of universities and colleges and professional organizations to present the need for more workers in the health professions and to consider effective methods of recruiting young people for these professions.

When the counselors requested that more information be made available to them on the health specialties, they were informed that nursing was the only field for which material had been prepared.

The Wisconsin Medical Society Women's Auxiliary had assembled and placed in every high school of the State a notebook (1) outlining opportunities in the nursing profession. This brochure had been initiated by the Wisconsin State Board of Nursing and prepared and underwritten by the Wisconsin State Nurses Association. The counselors wanted similar material for the other health fields and also asked assistance in obtaining representatives of the various health fields as speakers.

These and other methods of making available to students factual information regarding fields of health service proved helpful.

The guidance counselors emphasized the need to avoid the element of competition among the various specialties. They explained that coun-

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### **Member Organizations**

Milwaukee Public Schools; Milwaukee Institute of Technology; Hospital Council of Milwaukee County; Medical Society of Milwaukee County; Women's Auxiliary to the Medical Society of Milwaukee County; Kiwanis International, Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District; Milwaukee Advertising Club; Milwaukee League for Nursing; Wisconsin State Nurses Association, Milwaukee District; Wisconsin State Practical Nurses Association, Milwaukee District; Administrative Housekeepers Association;

Milwaukee County Dental Hygienists Association; Milwaukee Dietetic Association; American Physical Therapy Association, Wisconsin Chapter; Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association; Wisconsin Association of Medical Technologists; Medical Library Association, Midwest Regional Group; Milwaukee Medical Record Librarians Association; Wisconsin Medical Record Librarians Association; American Association of Medical Social Workers, Wisconsin District; Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Association; Wisconsin Society of X-ray Technicians.

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seling must be keyed to the interests and capacities of the individual and must not be distorted by competitive recruitment pressures. Basically sound guidance, they told us, gives the individual student information regarding the needs of the job, helps him identify his interests and determine what his capabilities best fit him to do.

The Public Relations Committee saw the careers pamphlet published by the Michigan State Medical Society (2) and agreed that a similar one keyed to Wisconsin needs would partly help in providing the material needed by the counselors. With the assistance and sponsorship of local and State medical and hospital groups, a brochure for Wisconsin (3) was developed and published in June 1953.

Three thousand copies were released to high school and college guidance counselors, libraries, and hospitals. Distribution outside Milwaukee County was handled through the

State medical society and the State hospital association and within the county by the county medical society and the local hospital council.

The interest of the Kiwanis Club in career days programs in the high schools was reported by a member of the hospital council who was also active in the club. Since these programs were an important potential for recruitment in the community, the council felt it desirable to maintain close association with the club's activities and appointed a representative for liaison between the two groups.

As the program of career days grew in the high schools, the use of speakers from the various professional fields increased. The Milwaukee League for Nursing developed a speakers bureau in order to handle requests for speakers in the nursing fields. Other professional groups made plans to follow suit.

### **The Recruitment Committee**

With the developing interest in nurse recruitment, the Community Nursing Council of the Milwaukee County Community Welfare Council had established a nurse recruitment committee in 1952. Its objective was the coordination of nurse recruitment efforts of the professional organizations with the work of other community groups interested in assisting with student nurse recruitment activities.

Membership of the Nurse Recruitment Committee included representatives from the nursing organizations, nurse executives from hospitals and agencies in the community, citizen leaders, representatives from the county medical society and its women's auxiliary, and spokesmen for the hospital council, the Kiwanis Club, and the public and private schools.

During the early days of the committee's organization it was somewhat difficult for the group to establish the understanding that its purpose was to give additional support to the professional organizations already actively working to relieve the nurse shortage and not to take over direct recruitment.

Some months later the group's function was clarified, and it began to make an increasingly important contribution to the recruitment efforts in the field of nursing.

About this time another conference for high

school guidance counselors was held under the joint sponsorship of the Nurse Recruitment Committee and the hospital council. Representatives of a number of the professional fields were present for discussion.

Following this meeting, the executive committee of the health division of the Community Welfare Council recommended that the committee's name be changed from Nurse Recruitment Committee to Recruitment Committee of the Health Division and that the renamed committee direct its attention toward coordination of recruitment efforts for all health service specialties.

The membership of the committee was then expanded to include 15 different health specialties and 7 civic and professional organizations functioning as channels of student recruitment for the health professions represented by the groups (see inset). The objective of the new committee remained that of synchronizing the recruitment efforts of professional organizations and coordinating the methods for getting career information to potential students.

The committee now faces a change in name again, to that of Careers Committee, as being more descriptive of its present activities. This seems to be more in keeping with its broadened scope and with its growing responsibility for interpretation of the various professional fields both to each other and to the public.

### **Effective Materials and Programs**

During the first year of its broadened functions (1954), the recruitment committee developed window displays for recruitment purposes, and it began developing and publishing recruitment materials for the use of committee members and their respective organizations. These materials are composite in nature, yet contain pertinent information about the individual health professions. They are intended to supplement—not duplicate—other available materials.

As of the present, the committee and its member organizations now have at their disposal the following pamphlets for career guidance as well as additional detailed recruitment materials published by the several professional organizations as part of their individual programs:

"In Planning Your Career Consider the Opportunities and Vast Fields Open to You as a Medical Associate," the brochure prepared for the use of vocational counselors and as library reference material (3).

"We Have Raised the Money for New Health Facilities, Now We Must Help Staff Them," a talk outline guide for adult groups such as parent-teacher associations (4).

"There's a Place on a Health Service Team for You," a pamphlet for student use, giving general information on 12 different health careers (5).

The recruitment committee is particularly fortunate in having good outlet representation among its members. Through their active interest and participation, much that is not necessarily a committee function has been accomplished.

For example—

The Milwaukee Advertising Club has given valuable assistance to the committee in the layout and editing of materials being developed for publication. The advertising club has helped arrange for newspaper space and radio time for spot announcements and has made it possible to obtain effective poster display materials.

The Women's Auxiliary of the Milwaukee County Medical Society has developed an active program of future nurse clubs and is promoting the interest of young people in professional preparation for health fields. This group has also provided scholarship assistance for nursing education.

### Assessment of Progress

Up to this point the values from the work of the recruitment committee have been apparent chiefly to its member organizations. The individuals comprising this multiprofessional group have gained greater understanding of the problems and the functions of the professions outside their own. There has been a stepping up of recruitment efforts on the part

of some of the member organizations as a result of the interest sparked by the committee's promotion activities.

Since the work of the committee represents a considerable expenditure of time as well as money from the member groups, it seems reasonable that some means of actual measurement of value should develop within the committee.

We can expect an increase in the number of enrollment applications in the Milwaukee and the State accredited schools which provide a curriculum of professional health training.

We have already observed an improvement of interprofessional understanding within the committee itself. The community value of this development will be in proportion to the degree of its reflection within the membership of the respective organizations.

As a corollary to the improvement of interprofessional understanding, the committee may expect to see increased community understanding of the contributions which the individual health professions make to the health needs of the community. This is a slow process but one which should make a constructive contribution.

### REFERENCES

- (1) Wisconsin State Nurses Association: Nursing brochure on recruitment. Madison, The Association, 1952.
- (2) Michigan State Medical Society: In planning your career consider the opportunities and vast fields open to you as a medical associate. Lansing, The Society, 1952.
- (3) Wisconsin State Medical Society: In planning your career consider the opportunities and vast fields open to you as a medical associate. Reproduced from the original brochure, Michigan State Medical Society (see ref. 2). Madison, The Society, 1953.
- (4) Milwaukee County Community Welfare Council. Health Division Careers Committee: We have raised the money for new health facilities, now we must help staff them. Milwaukee, The Council, 1954.
- (5) Milwaukee County Community Welfare Council. Health Division Careers Committee: There's a place on a health service team for you. Milwaukee, The Council, 1955.